

TWILIGHT.
Sing, sweet, it is the twilight hour
Thy voice brings rest and peace,
And unto thee is given the power
To bid all discord cease.
Let day fade with its load of sorrow
Now is enough for me!
I care not for the coming morrow,
For they may laugh at thee.
Oh, that this eve could last forever,
Ambition's sun be set,
For with thee near my heart would never
The busy world regret.
Only count us as Love's immortals:
Let each be one in soul;
Did Night halt at the western portals
And Death collect no toll.
Then twilight would be fraught with
splendor,
Bathed in Faith's golden stream,
And each to each all love would render—
Sing, sweet, and let me dream.
—Flavel S. Miles in Harper's Weekly.

THE STUFFED CAT.

I was all alone one evening in my study.
Do you not know this study? That is natural because I never have introduced you to it. Perhaps you would not like it. I like it very much—first of all because it is mine, and then because I have arranged it according to my tastes.
There is a little of everything in it—a colossal writing desk with an infinity of drawers and pigeonholes, a bookcase, some shelves for books, two tables, one large and one small; a divan, an armchair, on the floor rugs and cushions thrown down everywhere, pictures on the walls, a gas lamp in the center. In one corner on top of a column of black wood is a stuffed cat—a magnificent tiger striped cat with sparkling green eyes that seems ready to spring down from its pillar, tired probably of acting Simson Stylites.

In this den or study, as you please to call it, I pass beautiful hours, day or evening, writing, reading, meditating, smoking and doing nothing.

It is here that I retire in hours of the blues, in those hours of unconscious, instinctive ill humor which one cannot explain or justify and which exactly on that account one translates into an extraordinary nervous irritation.

This den is the despair of my wife and the rest of the household because they are positively forbidden to touch, to even move a book or a paper under pretext of putting into order which resolves itself into real disorder. I will wager that if my wife, my sister-in-law, my nieces, could arrange my den according to their tastes, turning it upside down, they would be happy. But they do not venture for fear of me. Only when I speak of my study all those feminine lips curl with smiles, disdainful, ironical or compassionate.

It is especially the stuffed cat that jars upon their nerves. My wife absolutely wished to throw him away, give him away, destroy him. I was obliged to declare to her that such an outrage would immediately provoke on my part a demand for legal separation pending the approval of divorce by vote of the Italian chamber of deputies.

Now that I have presented, so to say, the surroundings, I will go on to relate the fact, the terrible, frightful fact that has taken place in my delicious den and to which I am indebted for the gray hairs that embellish my 38-year-old locks.

One evening in the autumn of my family was in the country. I only had staid in town to attend to some urgent work.

I was all alone in the house. A woman came every morning to clean, to sweep and air the rooms and went away after noon. I dined at a restaurant.

Now, for some days I thought that I noticed in my study something strange, odd, unaccounted. It had the same effect upon me as if something were not in its place. I would have taken my oath that certain books had been moved, certain papers had been rummaged.

I questioned the domestic, who swore and perjured herself to the effect that, faithful to her trust, she had touched nothing, but had limited herself to sweeping the floor and dusting the furniture. And no one else ever entered the room.

One morning it seemed to me that the stuffed cat, my good cat with the green eyes that I called Tio when he was alive, had been touched. Certainly his attitude was not the same or I was dreaming. Yes, yes, his head was turned another way, and the expression of his face, that of an honest feline, was different from that which I was accustomed to have before my eyes. How in the world had such a strange phenomenon happened?

But this was nothing. For two or three evenings, shut up in my study, writing—alone in the large apartment—I thought I heard singular noises here and there. I arose from the desk, went out of the study and all through the house, carefully examining every room, stopping now in this one, now in that, to listen. Nothing. The rooms were deserted; the silence was complete, profound.

Then I returned to my study and set to work again. But the noises persisted and became more decided and frequent. I would have sworn that some mysterious and invisible being was scratching in the walls or forcing some lock. One evening indeed it seemed to me that the noise was just behind me, and I turned mechanically.

Well, I would have taken my oath that I saw the cat Tio move almost imperceptibly, and his eyes gleam brighter, and his back arch, and his bold, majestic tail stretch itself in an act of defiance. But surely it was an hallucination, because the cat was still in his place, impassive, and gave no sign of moving from his column.

All these small things, insignificant and extraordinary at the same time, had impressed and disturbed me. By instinct, by nature, I don't fancy what I cannot explain. I am a foe to the supernatural, the marvelous, the mysterious. I like to see clearly within and around myself.

I, you see, am of a well balanced and sound temperament. Nervousness, morbidness and such nonsense annoy me and are repugnant to me.

And as I think I know myself pretty well, I was surprised and bored by a state of mind so contrary to my habits and nature. Evidently my physio-psychological system was in a moment of crisis.

How could I get out of it—be cured? Must I, too, take the first train and go into the country? Perhaps that would

be the best way. But unfortunately I could not. I had an important engagement to supply some work, and I could not run away and leave it for whims of a dreamer fit for a hysterical woman.

"For bacco!" I told myself, "Pay no attention to the thing! Let us be a man, what the deuce!"

And I returned home that evening as usual, after having dined and visited the cafe.

I had planned to work hard that evening, in order to make haste to finish. Having entered the house I made as usual an inspection of the apartment and found everything as before. Not even a chair out of place. Then I went into my study and lighted the gas, to begin work.

But as soon as I seated myself at the desk and cast a glance upon the manuscript where I had left off writing, a marvelous, amazing surprise awaited me.

You must know that I was writing a novel—oh, what a novel! Something fine, exceptionally fine! A romance like that surely no one ever wrote. The real and the fanciful, the romantic, the classic, the naturalistic, were skillfully mingled in it.

Now that day when I went out I had interrupted the story at a very interesting point, and the period ended thus: "He burst into a sonorous laugh of scorn; he was very sure that the time of phantoms and specters was long past! That apparition then gave him no fear. It must be a trick."

I had left it there. Taking up the pen in order to continue, with my good cigar lighted in my mouth, I cast my eyes on the paper, and what did I see?

Just heavens! What indeed! Directly below the last line written by me had been written one word only: Fool! There it was, ironical and menacing, in Gothic letters, which showed the handwriting of a former age.

Who had traced this scornful and mocking word? You can imagine whether I remained amazed. I will say even more—I felt an impression of terror. My servant did not know how to read or write. No one had come into the house during the day. Then by whom had the words been written?

I grew livid and felt myself shudder. I leaped to my feet. I felt the hair stand on end upon my head and a cold perspiration trickle down my forehead. Tio, the accursed stuffed cat, looked fixedly at me, and his green eyes seemed to dilate and become variegated with a thousand colors. But was that cat really stuffed? Or was he not rather alive by virtue of some witchcraft?

All at once I roused myself. I had a feeling of shame and rage; and furious, striking with a heavy fist on the writing desk, I exclaimed: "But who is the demon who has written this word? I would like to know him to twist his neck!"

If I were to live a thousand years, I shall never forget what happened then. I had hardly finished speaking those words when the study resounded with mocking laughter—dry, strident, infernal.

Then the wall opened suddenly, and there came forth a woman wrapped in a great black mantle. And Tio, the accursed cat, made a leap from his pillar, and meowing as he had never meowed in his lifetime went to rub himself against that mysterious being.

I drew back more dead than alive. Still, I had enough presence of mind to stretch a hand behind me, open a drawer of the desk and take out a loaded revolver. As soon as I had seized the weapon I felt safer.

I raised my arm and pointed the revolver at that being, with the exclamation: "Now, we will see who you are!"

Alas! Once, twice, thrice I touched the trigger, but the revolver was no longer obedient. The mysterious figure made two steps toward me. The black mantle that enveloped her fell to the floor.

What a fearful sight! It was not a man nor a woman. It was a skeleton—a skeleton with two lights flaming in its empty, cavernous eye sockets—a skeleton that laughed satanically, while the cat Tio made fantastic and wild leaps.

It was—it was Death!

In the morning they found me insensible in my den. The servant ran to call a physician, who found me in a high fever. My family hastened from the country. I was taken care of, treated and cured. But the fact remains, my hair had turned gray.

When I was able to return to my den, the cat Tio was no longer there. My wife had made a coup d'état and sent to be thrown into the river. The column had also disappeared. It had been given away. I do not know to whom.

My manuscript was, however, still in its place. Only the word "Fool" was no longer there.

Then it had not been written? Still I was very sure of having read it. Who knows? If the cat Tio had still been there, perhaps he could have told me. But poor Tio was there no more.

Then, what am I to think? What shall I believe?—Translated From the Italian For Short Stories.

Curious Offer of Marriage.
A piece of evidence some time back in a Quebec breach of promise case was a cuff with an offer of marriage written on it. One night, while the defendant was holding the plaintiff's hand and whispering fervid words, he popped the question on the smooth linen at her wrist. She was sentimental or shrewd enough to keep that article out of "the wash."

A new vinaigrette of cut glass is encrusted with forget-me-nots of blue enamel.

A Limoges vase partially overlaid with perforated silver was observed among things new.

Pearl butterflies with spots of pink shell or of turquoise are seen. Turquoise is also used in these butterflies.

BREVETTES

PERSONAL GOSSIP.

Sir William Pink is one of the few English grocers who have ever been knighted.

In a poll taken among the editors of France by The Petit Journal as to who in their opinions should constitute the "real Academy" Zola led with 1,193 votes.

Mr. Gladstone is one of those people who do not destroy letters. The venerable statesman is said to have a collection of 60,000 letters deposited in a strong room at Hawarden castle.

Ex-Senator T. W. Palmer of Michigan is considering plans for the investment of \$300,000 of his own fortune to be devoted to the advancement of women who have to earn their own living.

Dr. P. H. Reiche of Waverly, Md., has a bronze medal which was struck by congress to commemorate the valorous charge of Colonel John Eager Howard Jan. 17, 1781, at the battle of Cowpens.

The Duke of Parma spends all the income of Chambord on the famous castle of that estate, and since the death of the Comte Chambord, his uncle, is said to have used \$100,000 yearly in keeping it in repair.

Thomas Duffin of South Lincolnshire, England, was 96 years of age last January. He has a son, George Duffin, who is 73; a grandson, George Duffin, who is 47; a great-grandson, Joseph Duffin, who is 25, and a great-great-grandson, George Duffin, aged 6.

The twin brothers Darius and Cyrus Cobb of Boston, who are 59 years old, look so much alike that their own children often mistake them. They married sisters. Darius is a sculptor, and Cyrus is a painter. William Hunt, the artist, once styled them "Serious" and "Delirious."

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